

Cosmetic Prosthetic Center to Open

A Cosmetic Prosthetic Center to serve facially disfigured persons is being established at the Medical Center. The new venture, directed by Elon H. Clark, professor of medical art and illustration, is believed to be the first of its kind with resources for the total rehabilitation of patients who require artificial noses, ears or other facial restoration. The Center does not deal in artificial wigs or eyes. Although work in cosmetic prosthesis has been an activity of the Duke Medical Illustration Department for the past 15 years, establishment of the Center will allow for increased service and will make possible increased research in prosthetic techniques and materials. The Center will be supported by a grant of \$33,574 from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Cosmetic prostheses are designed to improve the appearance of persons who have been disfigured by disease, injury or birth defects. Mr. Clark notes that the majority of patients seen by the Duke group exhibit a defect that is the result of a malignant disease.

Facial restorations are made at Duke from a vinyl resin plastic. This type of facial restoration will last only a year or slightly longer. However, individual molds are retained at the Center so the patient can be "serviced" the rest of his life. It is possible now to complete a prosthesis in one day and no hospitalization is required. Production of a prosthesis originally took five days.

Research activities at the Center will be directed toward improving the durability, flexibility and skin-like quality of the prosthesis. To date there has been relatively little research in the field. Mr. Clark states that "even the best prosthesis will eventually change color and deteriorate. By experimenting with new materials and processes, we hope to overcome these limitations."

There are few limitations imposed by the wearing of a facial restoration.

There is a possibility that the prosthesis can be accidentally jarred. However, only with children inclined to rough play is this apt to present a problem. Swimming is possible, but a deep sun-tan will contrast sharply with the prosthesis. In this case, make-up may solve the problem.

In addition to Mr. Clark, members of the Center staff are: Robert L. Blake of the Medical Illustration Department, assistant director of the Center; Dr. H. W. Humphries, former director of the Kershaw County Health Department, Camden, S. C., who will be engaged in research and rehabilitation activities; Forrest D. Wirt, head of the School of Dental Technology at the Durham Industrial Education Center, on a part-time basis as research associate; John Kelly, Jr., research assistant; and Pamela Draper, technician. A polymer chemist, yet to be appointed, will round out the group. It is of interest that Dr. Humphries is, himself, the wearer of a facial prosthesis. In addition to this staff, consultative service from the faculties of surgery and psychiatry will be available.

"Our prime purpose will be to return the patient to his home and community as a useful, productive citizen," Mr. Clark states.

Disaster Drill Given New Twist

The annual disaster drill was given a new twist this year when, on May 14, hospital personnel were asked to cope with casualties from a mock train wreck near the overpass across Myrtle Drive. Disaster drills in the past have included such catastrophes as a plane crash, an explosion at the Engineering School and the collapse of the roof of Page Auditorium. Considering the volume of passenger train service in Durham, this year's disaster had a touch of fantasy about it! Fancyful or not, the exercise provided personnel with serious and essential practice in handling large numbers of patients in a sudden emergency.

Employee of the Month



MRS. RUBY GONGS

This month we recognize the outstanding performance of Mrs. Ruby Gongs, who as a messenger with the Heart Station, has earned this honor. It is worthy of note that Ruby received recommendations from several nurses and ward secretaries with whom her work brings her in contact. Their comments indicate that Mrs. Gongs has a sincere interest in the welfare of her patients, has a genuine smile and goes about her work quietly and efficiently. Her politeness, pleasant personality, and her cooperative attitude were also brought out.

Mrs. Gongs has been with the Hospital since March 23, 1950, and we hope that she remains with us for many more years. Our congratulations to Mrs. Gongs for doing a splendid job.

Supt's Corner

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ment for the care of patients it sponsors. Deficits on these patients place a severe strain on our private patient income from other sources to provide the funds for even a restricted and tightly structured operation.